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A woman with a red bindi on her forehead, wearing a red and white patterned sari, is smiling as she spins yarn on a traditional wooden spinning wheel. The background is a rustic, dimly lit interior with wooden poles and beams. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font.

**Gender and
Migration
from a
development
perspective**

GENDER AND MIGRATION FROM A DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Excerpts from BRIDGE series, an Overview Report on gender and migration, Institute of development studies, 2005

Levels of development may lead to migration or encourage people to stay put. Migration has the potential to challenge *and* support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the same time (IOM 2005c). Yet migration does not feature prominently in development debates and the MDG framework. In fact it is only recently that the links between migration and development, and in turn the MDGs, have been recognised by both the migration and the development “communities” (Usher 2005). Gender, in turn, influences how development and migration impact on each other. Gender dimensions of migration, it has been suggested, are important to the achievement of the whole range of MDGs and not just the gender equality Goal 3 (Murison 2005). Working for greater gender equality in migration not only benefits women migrants but also increases the development impact of migration, moving us closer to meeting the MDGs (Usher 2005).

However, there is a clear lack of research on the impact of migration on broader social development and gender equality. In fact over the last 25 years there has been little concerted effort to incorporate gender into theories of international migration. This is partly because these theories have emphasised the causes of migration over questions of who migrates, therefore failing to address gender-specific migration experiences (Boyd and Grieco 2003). Similarly, the development impact of migration has been sidelined in international migration theory. In Section 5 on current policy approaches, the emerging development policies on migration and gender will be reviewed

The interrelations between gender, migration and development are outlined in the tables below, drawing together some of the issues raised so far and relating these to development. The issues currently

highlighted by development policy will then be discussed in further detail – i.e. remittances, “brain drain” and HIV/AIDS.

1 DEVELOPMENT⁴ IMPACTS

1.1 HOW LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT AFFECT MIGRATION DECISIONS

Development effects	Gender issues
<p>Levels of development encouraging people to move:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Faster development in some areas than others can lead to inequalities which create an incentive for people to move from one area to another in search of a better life. ■ Development can open opportunities to migrate by generating resources needed for people to make a migration journey from a sending area, or creating a demand for certain kinds of labour in a destination area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Are opportunities equal for both women and men in the home country? Do sex-segregated labour markets mean only men can find jobs, or that jobs for women are restricted to less-skilled and lower-paid job types? What compels women to migrate? Is it poverty and seeking economic betterment, or gender discrimination or violence? ■ Do gender norms and policies restrict women’s ability to move or pressurise men to move? How are decisions to move affected by household gender and power dynamics?

⁴ Here the term “development” is used to mean: improvement in human well-being – both economic and social. It includes but is not limited to poverty reduction.

- Government or international aid programmes such as dam- or road-building, which are intended to promote development, causing displacement as well.

Levels of development encouraging people to stay put:

- Higher levels of development providing an incentive for people to stay put rather than go elsewhere in search of a better life.
- Higher levels of development resulting in less mobile lifestyles for those traditionally on the move such as herders, nomads, gypsies.
- Are women empowered by migration or put at greater risk or both? Does the home country context or do the restrictive immigration policies of receiving countries make women vulnerable to trafficking?
- In the event of displacement, are women affected differently from men? They may have less economic resources to cope with displacement, or bear the burden of maintaining and caring for the family in a time of change.
- Where provisions/support are provided for the displaced, who are they provided to? If provided only to the "head of family" this may discriminate against women. If provided to women as well as men, this may promote greater gender equality.
- What level and type of development would give more women and men the choice to stay put?
- Do women and men benefit equally from higher levels of development?
- Who makes the decisions to stay put?
- How do women and men gain and lose from the settled lifestyles



1.2 HOW MIGRATION IMPACTS ON LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT 24

For migrants themselves

Migration impacts

- Migration may be a response to poverty – but may or may not result in a better life for women and men.
- Migration may be a response to gender discrimination or constraining gender norms – challenging these may open new possibilities for social and economic development.
- Returning migrants may gain kudos as well as bringing home new skills and enhanced career opportunities. However, if migrants have undertaken sex work, for example, they could be stigmatised.
- Migration may lead to higher incidence of HIV/AIDS for those migrating and those left behind.

If migration is in the form of trafficking, women may experience further discrimination, exploitation or violence.

Gender issues

- Are there opportunities for both women and men to migrate? Are spouses and families entitled to “family reunification”? Including unskilled women migrant workers?
- How does the sex-segregated labour market in the destination country affect who benefits from migration? Does this affect the opportunities for entry, including whether regular or irregular?
- Do gender norms and policies restrict women’s ability to move through regular channels? Does this push women into more dangerous irregular channels?
- Once there, are the expected possibilities for social and economic development realised? For women as well as for men?
- Does migration change gender relations? And, if so, is this in a positive or negative way?
- Are women and men migrants (and those they may leave behind) at greater risk of contracting HIV?

- How does migration affect when women migrants return and how prepared they are for reintegration?

For sending societies

- Economic and social remittances and diaspora investments may provide opportunities for development in the sending country.
- Returning migrants may bring new skills and new ideas.
- Women, men and transgender people who migrate to escape gender discrimination and constraining gender norms may bring back new ideas on social development and gender equality.
- Women left behind may gain more independence and confidence.
- There may be an economic impact of loss of skills with “brain drain”.
- While migration in itself does not cause HIV infection, returning migrants or those left behind may be at more risk of HIV infection due to separation and desire for intimacy.
- Migration may result in increasing inequality between migrants and non-migrants (e.g. in Pakistan, Tamas 2003).
- Who are remittances sent to? Older women rather than younger women? The men in a family rather than the women? Who benefits from the remittances? Do women or men send more of their income in remittances?
- Who is empowered by migrating? Are women empowered? Are transgender people empowered? Do those women left behind gain more independence or a greater work burden?
- What jobs are open to women in the receiving country? Do women bring home new skills as much as men as migrant workers? Are women able to gain jobs in line with their qualifications and experience?
- What skills are exiting the sending country? Are the skilled workers leaving primarily women or men? What impact is this having on economic development in the home country?
- What increases the risks of women and men contracting HIV as migrants or as those left behind? Are women who end up as irregular migrants more at risk?

For destination societies

- Migration may meet demands in the labour market for additional skills and cheap labour.
- Migration may bring in new perspectives and enrich cultural diversity.
- Restrictive immigration policies may push women in particular into irregular channels, including being trafficked.
- Migrants may be seen as competing for jobs, creating a drain on resources and hence feared or stigmatised by host societies (whether internal or cross-border migrants).
- Are the opportunities for women and men to enter through regular channels the same? Are women being forced into irregular channels or into being trafficked?
- Are women migrants more vulnerable to exploitation and sexual violence in isolated workplaces, e.g. as domestic labourers or sex workers?
- What legal rights do women and men have, including rights to citizenship and political participation?
- Is there access to health, education and other services for migrants (irregular and regular)? Is access to services dependent on legal status?
- Does migrant domestic labour liberate host society women to pursue careers?
- Do men and women in the host society have different attitudes to migrants? Do they feel differently about women and men migrants?

4.2 REMITTANCES

Remittances can have a huge development impact on sending societies, whether they are purely economic or take the form of a transfer of skills or new ideas. There has been increasing attention paid to remittances as a motor of development, including by development policymakers (de Haan 2000). Remittances from overseas workers add



up to more than US\$100 billion a year. About US\$60 billion goes to developing countries, exceeding funds from all overseas development assistance. Rural-urban remittances account for at least 12–15 per cent of the rural income for Asia and Africa, possibly far more, as most remittances through informal channels are not recorded. There has also been increasing attention paid to diasporic investment in the home country. 70 per cent of the foreign investment which fuelled China's economic growth comes from the Chinese diaspora.

With internal remittances, the person remitting tends to retain greater control of the spending. With international remittances, the migrant usually remits to another family member who has more control over how the money is spent. It is generally believed that women send home a greater share of their earnings in remittances (Sorensen 2005 and Alvarado and Sanchez 2002) and that women are also the greatest receiver of remittances. Remittances can be a vehicle for changing gender relations – winning respect for women who remit, and providing more resources and control of resources to women who receive them. However, this is not automatically the case. The expectation that women will remit more may put a greater burden on women migrants. Sometimes husbands' remittances may be sent to male family members, such as brother or father, rather than wife, thus reinforcing gender hierarchies (Sorensen 2005). Further gender analysis is required into remittances and diasporic investment (Piper 2005).

4.3 THE “BRAIN DRAIN”

Every year 23,000 graduates leave Africa for opportunities overseas, mainly in Europe. The emigration of technically skilled people has left 20,000 scientists and engineers in Africa, servicing a population of

about 600 million. A submission to the UK International Development Committee (IDC) session on migration and development in 2003 declares: 'In many ways, the loss of skills could be counted as Africa's foreign assistance to the developed world!' (Commonwealth Business Council AfricaRecruit 2003: 2). The IDC's report states:

It is Unfair, inefficient and incoherent for developed countries to provide aid to help developing countries to make progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on health and education, whilst helping themselves to the nurses, doctors and teachers who have been trained in, and at the expense of, developing countries. (IDC 2004)

However, data on such "brain drain" is inadequate and some claims about quantity and impact may be exaggerated, with significant benefits accruing to the sending areas from remittances and diaspora investment and connections.

The IDC report, however, also states that

It is too simplistic to say that the export of skilled labour necessarily results in a net loss to developing countries ... to developed countries it can be a way of filling skills gaps in their economies; to migrants it is a way of improving their lives; and to some developing countries it is a way of tapping into the benefits of remittances and the eventual return of skilled labour. (IDC 2004)

Little gender analysis has been done on the "brain drain". However, it is clear that the sex-segregated labour market influences which professional categories are able to migrate – for example the flow of nurses from the less developed to the developed world is overwhelmingly female, yet the flow of other professionals such as scientists, engineers and doctors is overwhelmingly male. Research amongst Chinese migrants in Australia reveals a "brain waste" as migrants drift to lower-skilled jobs. This is particularly pronounced among women who are most likely to migrate in order to accompany their spouses (Ho 2004). The researcher Christina Ho reveals: 'I encountered dozens of women cleaning hotel rooms or sewing clothes in their living rooms and garages, who had previously worked as teachers, engineers and in other professions.' Many women had become financially dependent on their spouses for the first time (ibid.).

4.4 HIV/AIDS

In some migrant populations there are higher rates of HIV/AIDS infection than in more stable populations, such as in South Africa (Lurie 2004). Mobile populations, including refugees and labour migrants, may be more likely to have unsafe sex due to: isolation resulting from stigma, discrimination and differences in languages and cultures; separation from regular sexual partners; desire for intimacy, comfort and pleasure in a stressful environment; sense of anonymity; power dynamics in buying or selling sex; and lack of access to health and social services, information and condoms (Inter-Agency Group on Aids 2004). Women may be at risk of unsafe sex due to lack of negotiating power in sex, including in transactional (or paid-for) sex, and due to ideas of femininity as submissive and sexually innocent. Men may be at risk of unsafe sex due to: ideas of masculinity as aggressive, risk-taking, and sexually dominant; and greater power to set the terms for sex.

Disruption and displacement caused by conflict may lead to changes in sexual behaviour, an increase in the rate of sexual abuse (e.g. by armed forces), and to decreased access to blood screening facilities. Studies conducted in Rwanda and Sierra Leone found sexual favours from women were often demanded in exchange for food, which led to an increase in the number of women's sexual partners and hence vulnerability to infection (Benjamin 2001).

The care burden is also an issue. For example, men have commonly migrated within and from Botswana for many decades, leaving women to care for children and maintain the home. It was also common for children to be sent to older women to be looked after. Previously, these women would rely on some remittances and financial support, usually from their migrant husbands or sons, for up to half their income. Now, however, rates of HIV mean men are increasingly falling ill and unable to provide income, and mothers are ill and dying, so older women are caring for more children with less income. Government and international aid agencies have undertaken initiatives to address the rapidly growing epidemic, but few measures address the current crisis of care as a key element in that process (Upton 2003).

Migrants are sometimes stigmatised as disease carriers and it is important to make the point that migration does not in itself cause HIV infection, rather it depends on how migration happens and under what conditions.

Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation & Poverty



DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE ON MIGRATION, GLOBALISATION & POVERTY

Briefing No. 7 October 2005

Migration and Inequality: Policy Implications October 2006 No.7

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

The 2005 Human Development Report describes inequality as a 'fundamental issue for human development', arguing that progress towards Millennium Development Goals has been hampered by 'unequal access to resources and distribution of power within and among countries'. In contrast, migration represents an important livelihood diversification strategy for many in the world's poorest nations, and may be a way for poor people to gain better access to resources. So does migration help reduce inequality? If so, what policies can help enhance this effect?

INEQUALITY AS A CAUSE OF MIGRATION

Inequality is clearly a major driver of migration. Indeed, international migration is a powerful symbol of global inequality, whether in terms of wages, labour market opportunities, or lifestyles. Millions of workers and their families move each year across borders and continents, seeking to reduce what they see as the gap between their own position and that of people in other, wealthier, places. According to the UN there were 191 million international migrants in 2005, increasingly concentrated in the more developed regions of the world. Similarly, internal migration within poorer countries, whether permanent, temporary or seasonal, reflects both perceived and actual inequality of opportunity between places. It is not just inequality between sending and receiving areas that promotes migration. Inequality within sending areas can

also generate migration, since more unequal villages tend to produce more migrants than less unequal villages.

EFFECTS OF MIGRATION ON INEQUALITY

There is not much debate about the effect of inequality on migration. But it is more difficult to draw conclusions about the effect of migration on inequality. Given the range of different types of migration, and the varied contexts within which migration occurs, any overarching conclusion about impacts on inequality is unlikely to be very robust at a global or even a regional level. Examples can be found of migration both increasing and decreasing inequality in different circumstances in various parts of the world. Although different conclusions can be drawn from the range of evidence, there are some key questions to ask about each case:



- What scale is being considered?
Migration does seem to reduce inequality on a global scale but is this also the case at a micro level? Circumstances that affect equality within the household may be different from those that affect equality within a village, region or between countries.
- What location is being considered?
At a local level, the effects of migration may be different depending on location. In countries of destination, migrants may have unequal access to rights compared to local workers. In contrast, in places of origin, migrant selectivity, the sending of remittances, and resulting social change affect mainly socio-economic inequality.
- What time period?
The effect of migration on inequality is likely to change over time, because of the effect of networks which reduce the costs of migration and so extend the opportunity to migrate to a wider group of people. Initially, where migration is expensive, only the better - off will migrate, increasing inequality. But as social networks reduce the costs of migration, it becomes more accessible to poorer people, potentially reducing inequality
- What type of inequality?
Often inequality is measured in purely economic terms by income or wealth levels. But there are other types of inequality, including between men and women, between generations, or between different ethnic and caste groups. Indeed, different types of inequality may well be related.

MIGRATION AND GLOBAL INEQUALITY

Although it is not easy to generalise about the effects of migration on poverty, recent econometric analysis of the potential impact of liberalisation of temporary mobility under GATS Mode IV does suggest some scope for migration to contribute positively to both growth and equity. The World Bank's *Global Economic Prospects 2006* contains a model, based partly on the Migration DRC's Global Migrant Origin Database, which estimates that increased mobility equivalent to three

per cent of developed countries' skilled and unskilled work forces would generate an estimated increase in world welfare of over US \$350 billion. More importantly, this increase in welfare would accrue more to developing than developed countries – suggesting it would be beneficial for global inequality. However, this analysis is based on data aggregated at the national level, and so says nothing about the distribution of gains within migrant-sending countries.

BOX 1

MULTIDIMENSIONAL ASPECTS TO MIGRATION AND INEQUALITY IN REGIONS OF ORIGIN – BANGLADESH

Evidence from Bangladesh suggests that international migration can increase inequalities within villages of origin, as relatively wealthy individuals and villages that have more access to long-distance migration enhance their position in relation to the poor. However, in-depth evidence of the relationship between migration and inequality in an ethnographic study of movement from Talukpur, a village in Sylhet, Bangladesh, to the UK tells a more complex story. Here, it is argued that 'access to *bidesh* (abroad) has increasingly become the pole around which inequalities are clustered. Not only has it helped to create them, but so too has it become a metaphor for thinking about them'. The argument relates not only to economic inequalities, but also to broader social and cultural cleavages, with migration becoming one of a number of distinct measures of status and power.

Although inequality has increased between wealthier households and the very poor, it has decreased between the wealthiest – the elite that used to hold positions of power – and the many poorer households who were often previously dependant on this elite for economic and social support, but have now become much better off. Thus migration brought more than simply money, in the form of remittances; it also brought with it considerable changes to landownership in Talukpur, as well as 'cultural capital' and social prestige. In turn, remittances were also fed into other areas of life, with a wider impact on political, social and economic power. Gardner K. 1995. *Global Migrants Local Lives*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

MIGRATION AND LOCAL-LEVEL INEQUALITY

It is more difficult to make generalisations about the impact of migration on local level inequality. It is often the case that migration increases inequalities between those who have access to migration opportunities, and those who do not, especially where migration is legal, and to places where jobs are available and are better paid. In general, since the better off are more likely to have access to migration, and are more likely to access safe and economically lucrative migration opportunities, this can increase inequality between poor people and those higher up in the social hierarchy. However, richer village residents may also be less willing to migrate, leading to shifts in social and economic power in the village, (see Box 1).

WHAT INFLUENCES THE IMPACTS ON INEQUALITY?

A review of case studies from Central America, Eastern Europe, West Africa and South Asia carried out by researchers from the Migration DRC at the University of Sussex identified two main areas where policy changes could affect the way in which migration impacts on inequality at a global and local scale. The first is access – in other words who gets to migrate where – and the second is opportunity – the range of opportunities that different migration experiences open up. Where poor people have greater choice in terms of migration destinations, the net effect on inequality is more likely to be positive (See Box 2 on next page). Evidence from Ghana also suggests that those who migrate legally are also more likely to do well economically – but that the poor are often excluded from legal migration channels.

POLICY CHOICES—THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

Given the above analysis, the most obvious policy response to growing inequality is to ensure wider access to a range of (legal) migration opportunities for poor people, since as more people move, the process of migration generally becomes more equitable. In contrast, where the poor are effectively restricted to shorter distance, less remunerative

BOX 2

RESTRICTIONS ON MIGRATION INCREASE INEQUALITY

In Albania, a major reason why the poor are restricted to less beneficial migration opportunities within the country or to neighbouring Greece is because of strong restrictions on movement to elsewhere in Europe. Those who go to Europe anyway are often forced into undocumented positions where they experience exploitative conditions and find it difficult or impossible to contribute to households back home. Restrictions on international unskilled female migration from Bangladesh also effectively drives the migration of poorer women into illegality, making them significantly more vulnerable to exploitation and reducing the potential for their migration to help reduce either gender or income inequality. Studies in China have also suggested that the imposition of restrictions on migration (in this case internal) operate to enhance both spatial and inter-household inequality, whereas migration acts to reduce such inequality. Quoted in Black, Natali and Skinner, 2006

or less safe migration streams, they will lose ground in relation to less poor migrants.

The problem is how to enhance the access, especially of the poor, to more 'positive' migration experiences. At a global level, GATS negotiations may be one way, if poorer countries were to include the possibility of legal movement of their workers in wider negotiations over trade, although at present, GATS negotiations that deal with migration are dominated by intra-corporate transfers.

Another option is the development of a global 'managed migration' strategy. For example, economist Jagdish Bhagwati has suggested the creation of a 'World Migration Organisation' (WMO) to oversee and monitor migration in the way that the WTO does for world trade, whilst the Global Commission on International Migration suggested a consultative facility to codify and spread best practice, an idea partly taken up by the UN in its suggestion for a global forum on migration. W. R. Böhring argues that such an organisation could be the basis on which a consensus is built in favour of 'desirable migration', although any global forum might be just as likely to resolve to crack down on

irregular movements, which could increase the difficulty of movement for the poorest, reducing both access and opportunity.

Similar problems beset other global-level plans to manage migration more equitably. One is the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which holds out the prospect of reduced inequality between migrant workers and nationals in countries of destination, as rights would be enforceable through the courts. However, this Convention currently has just 27 signatories, all of whom are migrant-sending, rather than migrant-receiving nations, and is silent on the issue of *expansion* of migration opportunities. Even where bilateral agreements are signed between nations for the movement of migrant workers, sending nations have few points of leverage to increase workers rights, or promote the spread of benefits to home communities.

POLICY CHOICES—THE NATIONAL LEVEL

If access to preferential migration streams for the poor cannot be negotiated, another alternative is to seek to enhance the opportunities that existing migration flows provide. In this context, meso-level institutions – notably social networks – are important both in facilitating migration in the first place, and influencing how the income earned by migrants is, or is not channeled back to help reduce poverty and inequality. Here, pro-poor policies might include:

- Regulation of the recruitment process to ensure that migrant labour contracts are fair, accommodation for migrant workers is affordable, and abuses are avoided. In India, the existence of stable networks that link migrant workers to labour recruiters is seen as crucial in influencing Protecting workers rights can positively affect inequality outcomes for migrant workers
- Supporting initiatives by NGOs and local associations that seek to reduce the risks and costs faced by seasonal migrant workers, such as initiatives to support health care for migrant workers, whether in destination areas or on return, and attempts to make bus routes used by migrant workers safer.

- Support to hometown, religious, ethnic, village and alumni associations that play a crucial role in channeling remittances not only to individuals and families, but also to community-level investments and initiatives.

Another important set of institutions that influence the inequality-reducing or reinforcing effect of migrant remittances is in the financial sector. Individual migrants use a wide range of mechanisms to send money back to families and home communities, ranging from formal banks to money transfer agencies such as Western Union and MoneyGram, more informal *hawala* or *hundi* systems of transfer, and physically carrying or sending home cash during return visits. Of these transfer mechanisms, the more formal kinds tend to be heavily stacked against poorer migrants who wish to send smaller amounts of money, as exchange rates may be unfavourable, and commission rates crippling. Here, there is potential for policy to:

- Promote competition amongst agencies providing money transfer services, to drive down prices
- Regulate the activities of money transfer agencies to ensure transparency and trustworthiness

More generally, macro-economic stabilisation in countries of origin may also be critical to enable the investment of remittances in things other than personal consumption. Whilst personal consumption may stimulate local economies and so contribute to reducing inequality, substantial and sustainable investment in economic and social activities at a community level is clearly a higher goal for most governments interested in reducing inequality. Migrants cannot, and should not, be expected to make such a contribution entirely on their own.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

There are some key recommendations that policymakers should consider, to help ensure that migration reduces, rather than increases inequality:

- As migration management policies emerge, especially at a regional and global level, they should be monitored for their impact on inequality in all dimensions within and between countries



- Receiving countries should sign up to, and implement, the International Convention on Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families.
- Migration opportunities could be enhanced for the poorest through supporting worker's rights, regulation of recruitment processes, local migrant associations and NGOs, and safer transport.
- Consider further initiatives to promote transparent and safe mechanisms for poor migrants to transfer small sums of money, and to create a more attractive investment climate in countries of origin.

DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE ON MIGRATION, GLOBALISATION AND POVERTY

The Migration DRC aims to promote new policy approaches that will help to maximize the potential benefits of migration for poor people, whilst minimising its risks and costs. It is undertaking a programme of research, capacity-building, training and promotion of dialogue to provide the strong evidential and conceptual base needed for such new policy approaches. This knowledge base will also be shared with poor migrants, contributing both directly and indirectly to the elimination of poverty.

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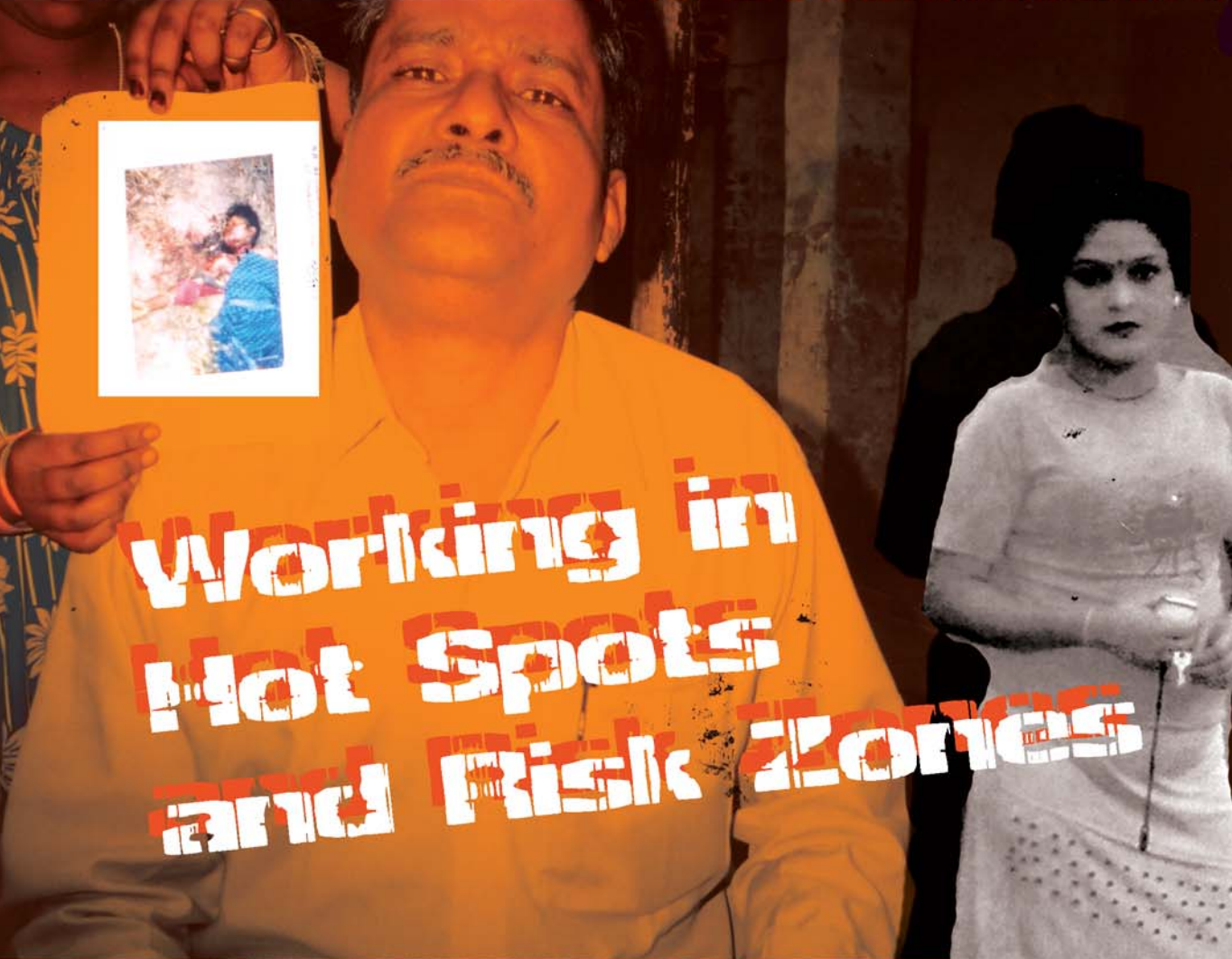
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**Working in
Hot Spots
and Risk Zones**



WORKING IN HOT SPOTS AND RISK ZONES

Reaching mobile men and women in areas where they are most at risk for HIV/AIDS is paramount for reducing the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS. (excerpts from 'Protecting People on the Move' 2006, FHI)

Across Asia, there are a number of hot spots, risk zones and other destination areas where the risks for HIV/AIDS abound. FHI focuses much of its resources on the strengthening of national behavioral and biological surveillance systems that allow us to identify important HIV/AIDS hot spots, and help us to document trends in HIV/AIDS prevalence and risk behavior. Over the past 10 years, FHI has worked with national governments to include mobile populations in their surveillance systems, and to cover more and more locations where mobile people travel and reside. In Lao PDR, for example, FHI collaborated with the National Center for HIV, AIDS, and STIs to expand the surveillance system to remote northern areas of the country, where cross-border movement to and from China and Myanmar is more likely than other parts of the country. Epidemiological data and other operational research have helped FHI and its partners to develop tailored interventions in hotspots, risk zones and other destination areas. In Indonesia, HIV/AIDS awareness and condom promotion campaigns have been conducted among vulnerable seafarers in port areas, such as Merauke (Irian Jaya) and Belawan (North Sumatra). Ports are difficult environments to work in because of the diverse ethnic backgrounds of their inhabitants, the short time seafarers are stationed there, and the seafarers' preoccupation with things other than HIV/AIDS education during their stay. In 2000–2001, PATH, with support from FHI and local port authorities, responded to these challenges by conducting simple, short educational and condom promotion sessions to fishermen in places that were important to them, such as in their boats or at port entertainment venues. Condoms were made available at hotels, guesthouses and other high-risk areas frequented by seafarers and their partners. Multilingual educational materials—

especially billboards and posters placed throughout the port area, and comic books that provided entertainment to the fishermen during long periods at sea—supported and reinforced the sometimes limited face-to-face communications. PATH also worked with other target groups—such as prostitutes and port authorities—to promote safer sexual activities. Besides port areas, HIV/AIDS hotspots may include workplaces that attract large numbers of mobile people. FHI/Indonesia has targeted vulnerable “mobile men with money” by focusing on workplace environments in the natural resource, transportation and manufacturing sectors. Working directly with companies has important advantages: the company can act as a “key influential” on employee behavior, and company support affords implementers with unique access to the client population. In the Indonesian case, FHI and its partners provide technical and financial assistance to local NGO; these organizations then train companies to set up and run their own HIV/AIDS programs. Companies assume all of the programmatic costs, including the training costs provided by the local NGOs. After training, companies can do the following:

- Train key staff to integrate HIV/AIDS prevention messages into existing human resource and communications programs
- Educate workers about HIV/AIDS, and distribute condoms and educational materials
- Refer workers to available STI, VCT and care and support services
- Develop policies on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment

One hundred and ten company teams have currently received training, and over 550,000 migrant workers have been reached. Over 6,000 member companies of the Indonesian Employers Association received HIV/AIDS program start up tools between 2004 and 2005. Through collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower, prevention programs will be provided to an additional 1,000 companies over the next four years. Like some large workplaces, border areas across Asia often show high rates of HIV and risk behavior. HIV/AIDS interventions are especially needed in areas where there are no HIV projects, a large target population, high HIV prevalence (either locally or among mobile people),

and engagement in risk practices. In some border areas, people move through quickly and there may be insufficient people at risk to target. Other challenges include the remoteness of the border location, the cultural and language differences of the populations that

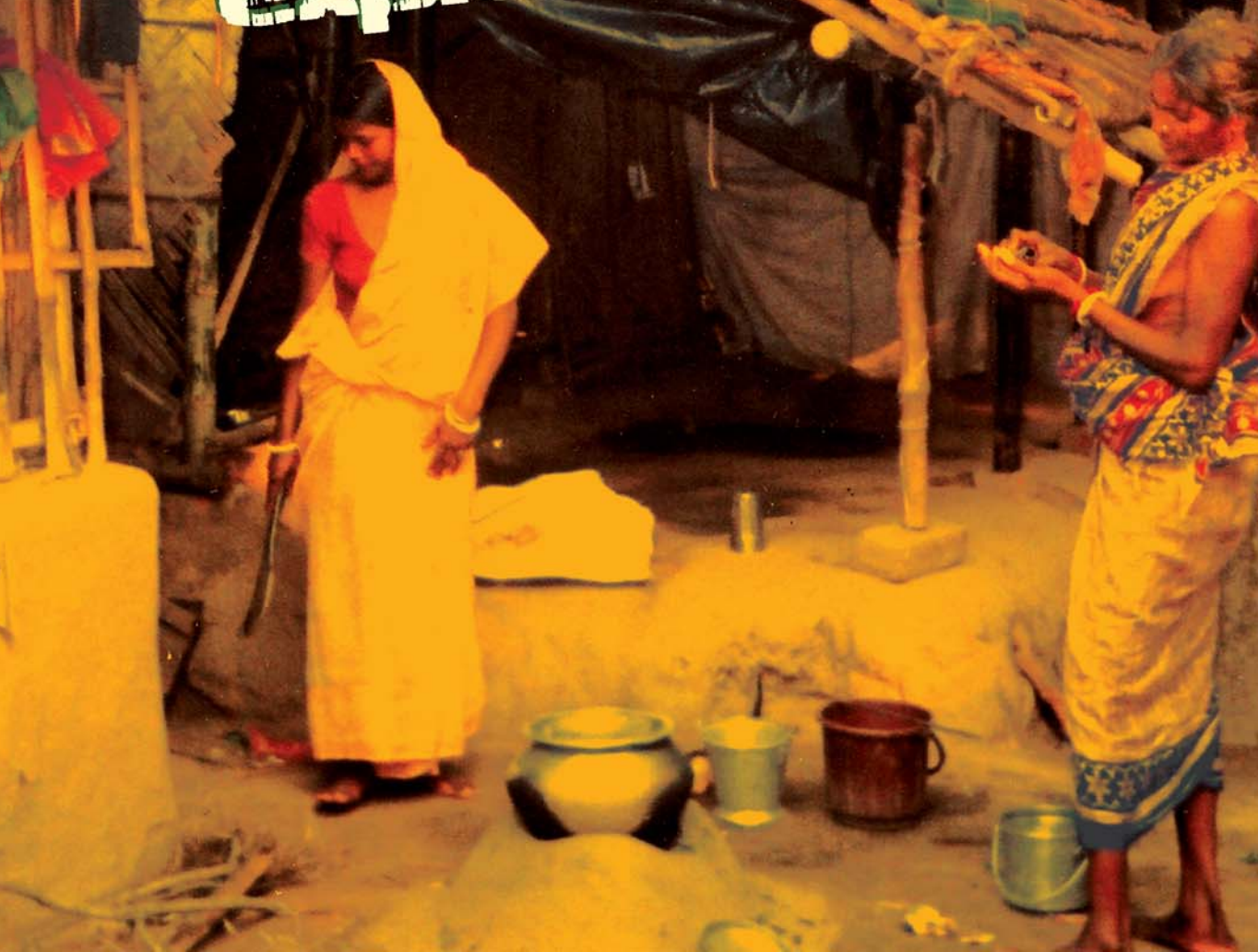


pass through them, and the tendency of these areas to have less developed health care infrastructure and limited services. These and other factors must be weighed before beginning interventions in border sites.

In areas like highway rest areas and ports where target populations are only accessible for short periods of time, creative HIV/AIDS prevention strategies can help us extend our reach and impact. Mobile health units and health education teams that go to the target groups—rather than vice versa—are crucial. Multilingual, culturally-appropriate messages and materials that appeal to the people we work with and respond to their needs and desires also can help to increase awareness and effect behavior change. So too can intensive mass media campaigns focusing on risk environments along the mobility continuum. Identifying where risk behaviors occur can allow us to direct our interventions in places where they can have the greatest impact.

For some mobile people—such as undocumented migrants—prisons and detention centers constitute their home away from home. Epidemiological and behavioral research suggests that interventions in prisons—where risk behaviors like unprotected sex and injecting drugs also take place—can do much to reduce the vulnerabilities of mobile people and augment the impact of HIV/AIDS on the larger community.

**Cause or effect:
HIV/AIDS and
migration
intersections
explored**



CAUSE OR EFFECT: HIV/ AIDS AND MIGRATION INTERSECTIONS EXPLORED

Belinda dodson and jonathan crush examine the relationship between hiv/aids and migration in southern africa, and find that it works both ways.

Crossings, march 2006

DEADLY LINKS BETWEEN MOBILITY AND HIV/ AIDS

The geography of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is a clue to its link with mobility. The highest incidence is in Southern African countries such as Swaziland, South Africa and Botswana, which have good transport infrastructure and high levels of internal and cross-border migration. In this region, as elsewhere, the incidence of HIV has been

found to be higher near roads and amongst people who either have personal migration experience or have sexual partners who are migrants. Itinerant traders display high infection rates, and the rate is spectacularly high amongst truck drivers – over 90% in one South African study. Border towns have high rates of HIV prevalence, being places where transients such as truck drivers encounter a more stable local population, and which are by definition remote from nationally centralised HIV/AIDS intervention programmes. Refugees and internally displaced persons have also been found to be especially vulnerable to HIV infection, often resulting from the same disruption that caused them to migrate (eg soldiers using rape as a weapon of war).

What is it about people moving that makes them vulnerable? While the specific explanation will vary from migrant to migrant and place to place, there are four key ways in which migration is tied to the rapid spread and high prevalence of HIV/AIDS:

- Migrants' multi-local social networks create opportunities for wider sexual networking.
- Mobility and transience can encourage, or make people vulnerable to, high-risk sexual behaviour.

- Mobility makes people more difficult to reach through interventions, whether for preventive education, condom provision, HIV testing and counselling, or post-infection treatment and care.
- Migrant communities are often socially, economically and politically marginalised, both officially, in terms of legal rights and protection, and unofficially, through discrimination and xenophobia.

These deadly intersections between mobility and HIV/AIDS mean that mobile populations are more likely to be exposed to infection, less likely to have access to formal health care and treatment, and less likely to have family and community support when sick or dying. Looking at the relationship from the other direction, it is also apparent that HIV/AIDS is becoming an increasingly important factor driving migration and mobility in Southern Africa. High rates of death or disability in particular labour sectors, such as the mining industry, create a need for new migrant workers. Loss of household income through the death or disability of a former migrant worker encourages migration by remaining household members to seek income-earning opportunities. People with HIV/AIDS, especially those with AIDS-related infectious diseases, migrate to obtain medical care, or to be cared for by family members. This might entail moving from an urban back to a rural area or from one country back to another (eg from South Africa to Lesotho or Mozambique). Others move to care for family members living elsewhere. New widows or widowers, themselves often HIV-positive, may migrate upon the death of their partners, either to seek support from family members or to search for new sources of livelihood. AIDS orphans, who may also themselves be HIV-positive, commonly migrate to live with relatives or to seek their own income-earning opportunities. And people living with HIV/AIDS move to escape the stigma and ostracism they experience in their communities.

In drawing attention to these two-way connections between HIV/AIDS and human mobility, it is essential not to characterise migrants as bearers of disease, people to be “kept out” with stricter migration controls. Stigmatising or marginalising migrants further, or even simply ignoring their particular HIV/AIDS intervention needs, will serve only to strengthen the dangerous synergy between HIV/AIDS and migration.

Attempting to limit mobility by imposing legal restrictions on migration simply creates clandestine flows of people, who are thus further excluded from access to social and medical services. Instead of futile attempts to prevent people from moving, there needs to be HIV/AIDS interventions, from education and prevention through testing and counselling to treatment and care, which are designed for and targeted at particular migrant populations. Different forms of migration demand different policy responses. In Southern Africa there are at least four broad categories of migrant populations, and each demands a specific intervention strategy:

- Migrant or immigrant communities who have left one place to settle in another, either long-term or permanently. These people require focused interventions in their new location, ideally in their own language, until they become fully integrated into their new host societies.
- Trans-migrants, such as migrant workers, who have “homes” in more than one location. They require interventions at both “homes”, as well as en route between them, and interventions for their partners.
- Itinerant or mobile populations, such as truckers and traders, who either have no fixed home or spend most of their time away from home. Perhaps the most difficult to reach, as they do not constitute a spatially fixed community, these people require interventions that mirror their movements – for example, condoms at truck stops, education material on buses and clinics at markets.
- Temporarily dislocated communities such as refugees and internally displaced persons. Intervention here requires rapid response in a highly mobile form, especially where the very circumstances forcing people to move, such as war, simultaneously expose them to the threat of HIV infection.

Providing migrant communities with appropriately targeted HIV/AIDS interventions is the only realistic means of dealing with the current HIV/AIDS epidemic and containing its spread. Mobility is the means by which many African individuals and households seek security of income and livelihood. Yet surely the very means by which a migrant seeks to secure a living should not also have to be a virtual guarantee of death?





**The Inter State
Migrant Workers
Act, 1979
Synopsis**

THE INTER STATE MIGRANT WORKERS ACT, 1979 - SYNOPSIS

The Inter State Migrant Workers Act, 1979 was put into force in response to an exploitative form of labour known as 'Dadan Labour' that was prevalent in Orissa. Dadan labour was recruited from various parts of India through agents or contractors. This system of labour was exploitative as working conditions were hard, and wages and hours of work were not fixed. The necessity for this Act and the Contract Labour Act stemmed from the nature of employment which involved a tripartite relationship of employment, where there was no direct relationship between the principal employer and the employee.

The main features of the Act are as follows:

1. It will apply to every establishment¹ in which five or more inter state migrant workers² have been employed. It will also apply to every contractor³ who employs five or more migrant workers.
2. The establishment will be required to register with the registering officers appointed under the Central or State Governments, as the case may be.
3. The contractor will have to obtain a licence from both the state from which he employs migrant labour (home state), as well as from the state to which he hires out such labour (host state).

1 An established means - (i) any office or department of the Government or a local authority; or (ii) any place where any industry, trade, business, manufacture or occupation is carried on;

2 An 'inter-State migrant workman' means any person who is recruited by or through a contractor in one State under an agreement or other arrangement for employment in an establishment in another State, whether with or without the knowledge of the principal employer in relation to such establishment.

3 A contractor has been defined as follows - "contractor", in relation to an establishment, means a person who undertakes (whether as an independent contractor, agent, employee or otherwise) to produce a given result for the establishment, other than a mere supply of goods or articles of manufacture to such establishment, by the employment of workmen or to supply workmen to the establishment, and includes a sub-contractor, Khatadar, Sardar, agent or any other person, by whatever name called, who recruits or employs workmen

4. The contractor is required to furnish particulars of the migrant workers employed by him, in the prescribed form (under the Rules formulated by the home and host States) to authorities in both States. The contractor is also required to provide his migrant employees with pass books containing the details of their employment (such as wages paid, period of employment, deductions if any and such other particulars as may be prescribed).
5. Wages are to be paid from the date of employment and in accordance with prescribed guidelines and equal pay for equal work regardless of the sex of the worker is to be given
6. Journey and displacement allowances are to be provided in addition to wages.
7. The following amenities are to be provided to workers – suitable residential accommodation, prescribed medical facilities free of charge, protective clothing to suit prevalent climatic conditions and suitable conditions of work taking into consideration the fact that the workers have migrated from another State.
8. If any allowances have not been paid, or facilities not been provided by the contractors, such allowance/facility shall be provided by the principal employer.
9. Inspectors have been appointed under the Act to monitor the implementation of the Act.
10. The migrant workers may raise an industrial dispute either in the host state or in the home state (after his/her return after completing the contract of employment).
11. Punishment/penalty provisions exist for contravention of the provisions of the legislation. The offender shall be punishable with imprisonment up to one year or a fine up to Rs. 1000 or both.
12. No court can take cognizance of an offence under this Act except on a complaint made by the previous written sanction of an Inspector or authorised person. The court trying the offence should not be lower than that of the court of a Metropolitan Magistrate or a Judicial Magistrate. The complaint has to be made within three months from the date on which the commission of the alleged offence came to the notice of the inspector or authorised person.

The definition of 'establishment' shows that the Inter State Migrant Workers Act applies to industry, trade, business, manufacture or occupation. It is thus difficult to include domestic work within the

purview of this definition. Though private placement agencies might come within the scope of the term 'contractor' if they employ five or more domestic workers, it is difficult to fit such work within the terms industry, trade, business, manufacture or occupation.

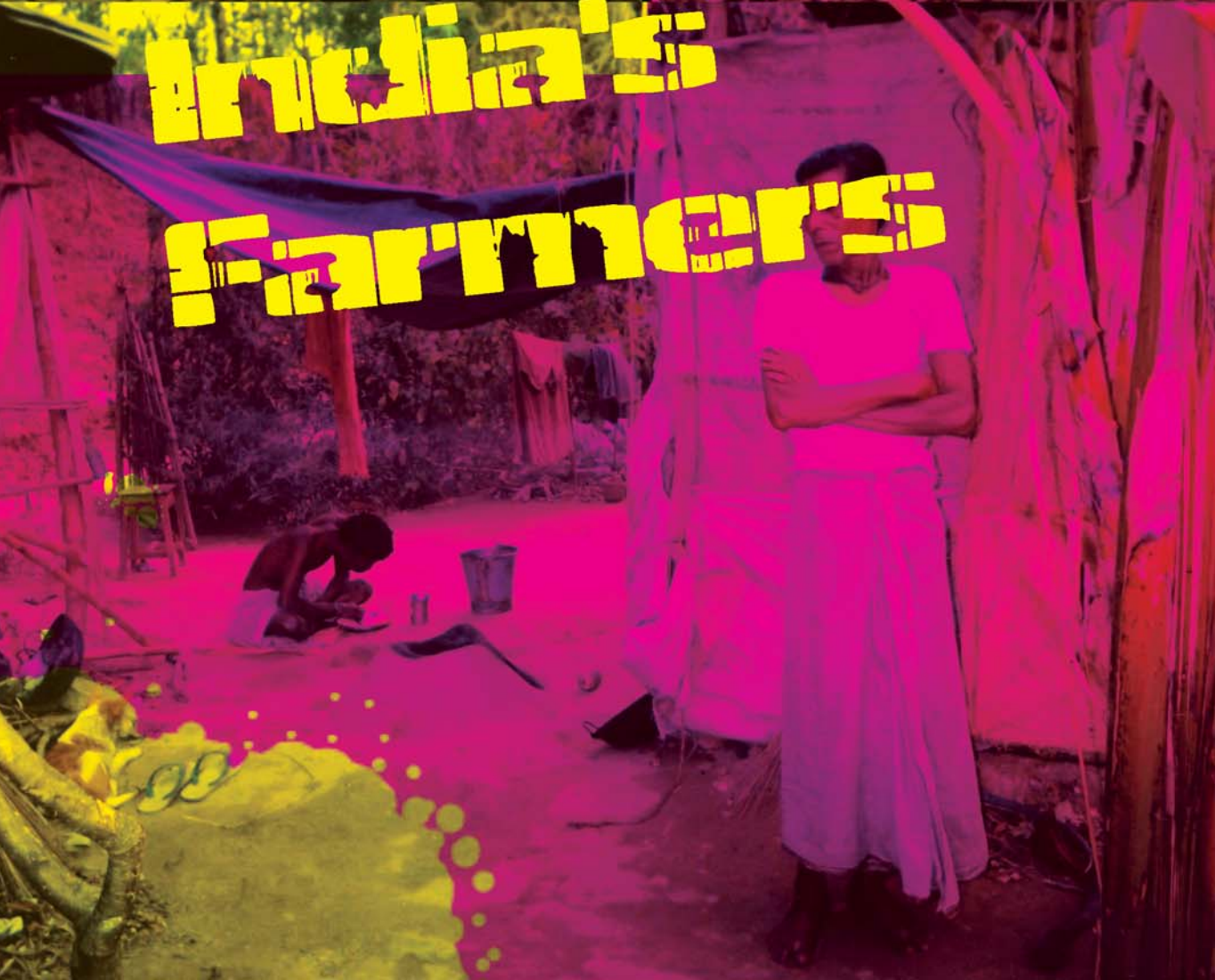
Inspectors used to face difficulties in obtaining permission from host states to enter premises of establishments in which migrant workers were employed to examine whether the provisions were being followed. The Supreme Court passed a judgment in 1990, mandating states to permit inspectors from carrying out their duties and directing them not to place any hurdles in their functioning.⁴ Whether this judgment was strictly followed or not is not known.

There are other obstacles in the functioning of the Inter State Migrant Workers Act. These include the following – Migrant workers are reluctant to give proper and complete information about their living and working conditions, there is lack of awareness about the existing rules and regulations, enforcement machinery is weak, workers are afraid of contractors and their agents, presence of workers' families result in further limitations and there is a lack of confidence in the local enforcement machinery.⁵

The Act requires that complaints be made by the Inspectors or authorised persons themselves, or by their sanction. This restricts the scope of the Act as it makes it necessary for persons to find Inspectors in order to initiate prosecution of offences under the Act. If the Inspector or authorised person is lax, then the complaint would not be made. There is more chance of the complaint not being filed within the time restriction of 3 months. There is thus a necessity for the Act to allow complaints to be made by the workers themselves, or if they are reluctant to do so, then for third parties to file complaints on their behalf.

4 "Inter-State Migrant Workers Act, 1979", Government of India, <<http://labour.nic.in/dglw/ismws.html>>

5 ibid



State of India's Farmers

STATE OF INDIA'S FARMERS

1. The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) carried out the SAS of farmers during 2003 (January–December) covering 51,770 households spread over 6,638 villages across the country.
2. According to the survey, at the all-India level, the average annual income of the farmer household was Rs 25,380, which includes cultivation, wages, farming of animals and nonfarm business income.
3. What is interesting here is that the income from cultivation accounts for only about 45 per cent of the total income and the remaining receipts are from other sources including wage income, which alone accounts for almost 39 per cent.
4. Clearly, the annual income from cultivation comes to only about Rs 11,628 per farmer household, after excluding the other sources.
5. The highest average annual income of Rs 65,856 was reported in Jammu and Kashmir followed by Punjab and Kerala.
6. The lowest income was reported in Orissa preceded by Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh.
7. Surprisingly, the income in the relatively developed states like Tamil Nadu and West Bengal is below the national level average.
8. The average annual expenditure on cultivation comes to Rs 8,791 per household at the all-India level.
9. As in the case of income, we notice a wide variation in the expenditure on cultivation across states.
10. As expected, the highest expenditure on cultivation was reported in agriculturally developed states like Punjab followed by Haryana and AP. Understandably, the lowest expenditure was reported in Orissa.

11. While deducting the average cultivation income (Rs 11,628) of the farmer households from the expenditure on cultivation (Rs 8,791), the annual net income (i.e., farm business income) of a farmer household comes to only Rs 2,837 at the all-India level.
12. The net income is negative in AP, Haryana, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, i.e., the annual expenditure on cultivation is higher than the annual income from cultivation.
13. Except states like Assam, J and K and Punjab, the annual net income of the farmer households is less than Rs 4,000 in all other states. In fact, it is less than Rs 1,000 per farmer household in Orissa, UP and West Bengal.
14. The situation is bleaker while comparing the annual income with the average annual consumption expenditure of the farmer households (ACEFH). The average ACEFH for the country as a whole was Rs 33,240.
15. The highest annual ACEFH was reported in Punjab followed by Haryana and Kerala, the lowest annual consumption was in Orissa.
16. It is shocking that except states like Assam, J and K, Karnataka and Punjab, the ACEFH has exceeded the annual income of the farmer households in all other states.
17. The worst-affected states in terms of expenditure exceeding the income are Rajasthan, Haryana, UP, MP and AP.
18. Though we do not see any one-to-one correlation between indebtedness and income-expenditure of the farmer households, there is a fair amount of correlation between the two across states in India.
19. Farmers from AP, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, MP, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and UP are heavily indebted possibly because the income of the households is not even enough to meet the consumption expenditure. In fact, the average debt per household varies from Rs 24,000 to Rs

42,000 in the relatively developed states like AP, Haryana, Kerala, Punjab and Tamil Nadu.

20. One of the SAS reports also indicates that given a choice 40 per cent of the farmers would quit agriculture and take up some other career
21. The results of the SAS sufficiently prove that farmers are not getting enough remuneration for their produce. This could possibly be because of a sharp deceleration in the growth of prices of many agricultural commodities and increase in the cost of cultivation after the introduction of reforms
22. It is reported from various parts of the country that the use of spurious inputs (seeds, fertilizers and pesticides) in cultivation is one of the major reasons for crop failure and low output. The sale of spurious inputs must be stopped by all possible means.
23. Another reason for the low income of farmer households could be the dominant role played by the middlemen in the market. Studies show that farmers were not able to get even 40 per cent of the money that the consumer pays for various agricultural commodities in the market. The role of middlemen can be controlled considerably by involving producers in the market activities.
24. Despite the significant increase in the flow of institutional credit, the SAS data shows that still over 42 per cent of rural credit supply comes from the noninstitutional sources like moneylenders, where the rate of interest is not only exorbitant but the terms and conditions of the loans are often exploitative.





**Indian Migrant
Workers:
Sweatshop
Conditions/
Ignorance
Lead to AIDS
Epidemic**

INDIAN MIGRANT WORKERS: SWEATSHOP CONDITIONS/IGNORANCE LEAD TO AIDS EPIDEMIC

Submitted by Mohuya Chaudhuri, special correspondent reporting on development related issues based in New Delhi.

New Year brought bad tidings for more than 400,000 daily wage labourers in India's diamond capital, Surat. A prosperous city in the western Indian state of Gujarat, Surat is known for its finely cut diamonds and textiles.

But despite a turnover of millions of dollars, individual businesses operate on a small to medium scale and are little better than sweatshops. Most employees who work in these small, congested workplaces are temporary, receiving low pay and no benefits.

Yet year after year, hundreds of migrant labourers from the eastern state of Orissa come to the city in search of employment and a new life. Statistics say that one district alone in the state - Ganjam - provides nearly 900,000 workers to Gujarat.

But on the eve of this year, the dream died for many of them when more than 6,000 powerlooms closed down, protesting a hike in power rates. Nearly 400,000 workers were retrenched overnight and asked to return only when the looms reopened.

Armed with uncertainty, these migrant labourers caught the next train home. But now, two months later, the crisis is no longer limited to their professional life. Though seemingly unrelated, scores of families of migrant workers who lost their jobs are waking up to yet another nightmare. HIV.

A survey of private pathology clinics, Red Cross and government laboratories conducted in the district in October last year revealed

that as many as 5000 migrant labourers who work in Surat are infected with the deadly virus.

But this is only the tip of the iceberg, believes Loknath Mishra, who runs Aruna, the first agency to provide counselling services in the area since 1996. He says that the actual figure is likely to be ten times higher since testing for HIV is not mandatory.

HIV counsellors in the area say that migrant labourers are especially vulnerable because they fall in the sexually active age-group of 16 to 35. Only 15% of these take their families along. Long, hard hours at work and an absent family life are some of the reasons why most of them visit sex workers and contract HIV through unsafe sex. Since these workers return home once every year, their wives and children, an additional 600,000 people, are also living under the spectre of HIV.

But the government refuses to acknowledge this medical emergency. Even though the first case was identified way back in 1995, the state has done little to check the spread of HIV. No comprehensive healthcare programme including prevention and control of HIV has been started neither have any awareness programmes been carried out among villagers, most of whom are extremely poor and illiterate.

Data is hard to come by because no baseline surveys have been carried out. Even so, doctors say the available infrastructure cannot handle a medical and social crisis of this scale. Apart from the lack of trained staff, there is only one authorised testing facility in the district – the microbiology lab at the MKCG Medical College. In the suburban areas, some private laboratories do offer the TRIDOT test but since this method is not confirmatory, the labs are not permitted to inform the patient whether he is positive or not.

In the villages, ignorance has bred fear and myths. Few are willing to talk about the disease, let alone volunteer for blood tests. A person who develops full-blown AIDS faces complete social expulsion. Thrown out of their homes and shunned by their families, AIDS patients live like animals.

Villagers even shy away from disposing the bodies of patients suffering from Aids. In Sunathar village, a 21-year-old migrant worker died of

AIDS on January 12th. He had been working at a textile mill in Surat for the last 3 years and contracted sexually transmitted diseases several times. 8 months prior to his death, he began to receive counselling from Aruna. But by then it was too late. He was already a carrier. And when he died, no one in the village, not even his family members, would do the last rites. It was left to volunteers to cremate him.

But the locals have other concerns. Ganjam is among the poorer districts in the state with few job opportunities. Most able people are forced to migrate and every year, fresh groups join the regulars travelling to Surat in search of a livelihood. But with mills closing down, the job market has shrunk significantly. Since all of them are temporary workers and work under exploitative conditions, they enjoy few rights, such as medical benefits. So, if anyone is known to be HIV positive, it would cost him his job. The situation has turned even grimmer now following the powerloom strike in Surat.

Meanwhile, with the return of jobless migrants, tension is building up in Ganjam. The local economy, heavily dependent on the earnings they sent, is nearly shattered. There's also resentment as far too many people vie for too few jobs. The administration is trying its best to prevent a break-down in law and order, but privately officials admit that the threat of HIV/AIDS riding on the back of the current economic crisis is perhaps the biggest challenge they have ever faced.

Posted on The Communication Initiative site February 22 2002



**Making of Female
Breadwinners:
Migration and
Social Networking
of Women
Domestics
in Delhi**

MAKING OF FEMALE BREADWINNERS: MIGRATION AND SOCIAL NETWORKING OF WOMEN DOMESTICS IN DELHI

Neetha Pillai; EPW, April 24, 2004

Migration of women is largely under-represented in migration studies in south Asian countries and is yet to be understood as part of the mainstream migration research, notwithstanding a few recent efforts towards engendering migration [Schenk-Sanbergen 1989; Sharpe 2001]. In the south Asian context, migration of women has been studied primarily from a male perspective, given the practice of village exogamy. Female migrants are assumed not to have much social or economic impact on their places of origin or destination. The existing theories of migration point to social, cultural and economic factors in explaining migration flows, where the focus has largely been the male migrant. As Thadani and Todaro (1984) point out, "Implicit in the analysis of migration is the assumption that the patterns of female migration are likely to mirror those of male migration. Consequently gender related variations in the causes, consequences and patterns of migration have not been considered significant enough to warrant specific analysis." Due to this male-centric conceptualisation, migration of most of the adult female population remains unexplored as it is seen as more domestic and, hence, private and not related to the sphere of production.

The associational status of women in migration points to the structural imbalances in the analysis of the existing theories of migration. There is a growing awareness on the need to break the analysis of migration along gender lines. This has given rise to some important debates on the engendering of migration studies, which has drawn attention to

the fact that female migration has wrongly been treated as secondary and entirely dependent upon the migration of men. Migration cannot be seen as a single discrete event, but as part of a broader strategy of families to cope with economic change. Gendered division of labour and labour markets, culturally patterned family preferences and definitions of appropriate male and female behaviour all influence migration, which necessitates the understanding of sex-differentiated migration patterns.

Female migration cannot be understood without relating to the dynamics of gender relations in the family and labour market. The theoretical approaches and explanations to migration are often found inadequate or insensitive in explaining women's migration due to the differences in the set of motivational and social factors associated with migration of women. Women are neglected due to their secondary migrant status, which basically emanates from the assumption of a subsidiary income earning position of women. The traditional image of women as tied to home and family is not true for the working masses, who form a majority of the population.

Women labour migration is increasingly a means through which asymmetrical, intersecting relations pertaining to gender, caste and class are structured and negotiated. This is particularly important in the context of major economic changes, which have implications for the mobility and structural positions of women. The intensity of female labour migration has generally been accepted to increase over the past few decades especially, with the changes in the economic structure of most countries. It is increasingly being recognised that women are no longer passive movers who followed the household head. The growing magnitude of case-study research and theoretical reflections point to this fact. In the patriarchal system, serious restrictions are imposed on women's mobility and participation in the labour market, which is especially so with unmarried and young girls. Sex-specific cultural constraints combined with practices of employment and wage discrimination all imply differences in the outlook and expectations of women migrants. Due to the gendered labour market, women are also demanded and have the incentives to move in the same way as men. The role of agency and social networks as facilitators in migration

has been recognized in the recent literature on migration theory. Though the usefulness of the social network theory is increasingly being realised, its interrelations with gender have hardly been addressed. The gendered labour market is found to have significant influence on the social networking of migrant families, where women do play a significant role in the mobilisation and access of social networks.

The centrality of women in migration is explored in the present essay, based on a case-study of migrant women domestics in Delhi, where female agents are key to the migration and survival of the working class families. The study covered 465 women part-time domestics from three squatter settlements in Delhi, namely, Trilokpuri, Nizamuddin, and Yamuna Pusta. Apart from this, the study also covered 110 residential or full-time women domestics recruited and placed through organisations/agencies.

DOMESTIC WORKERS IN DELHI: A PROFILE

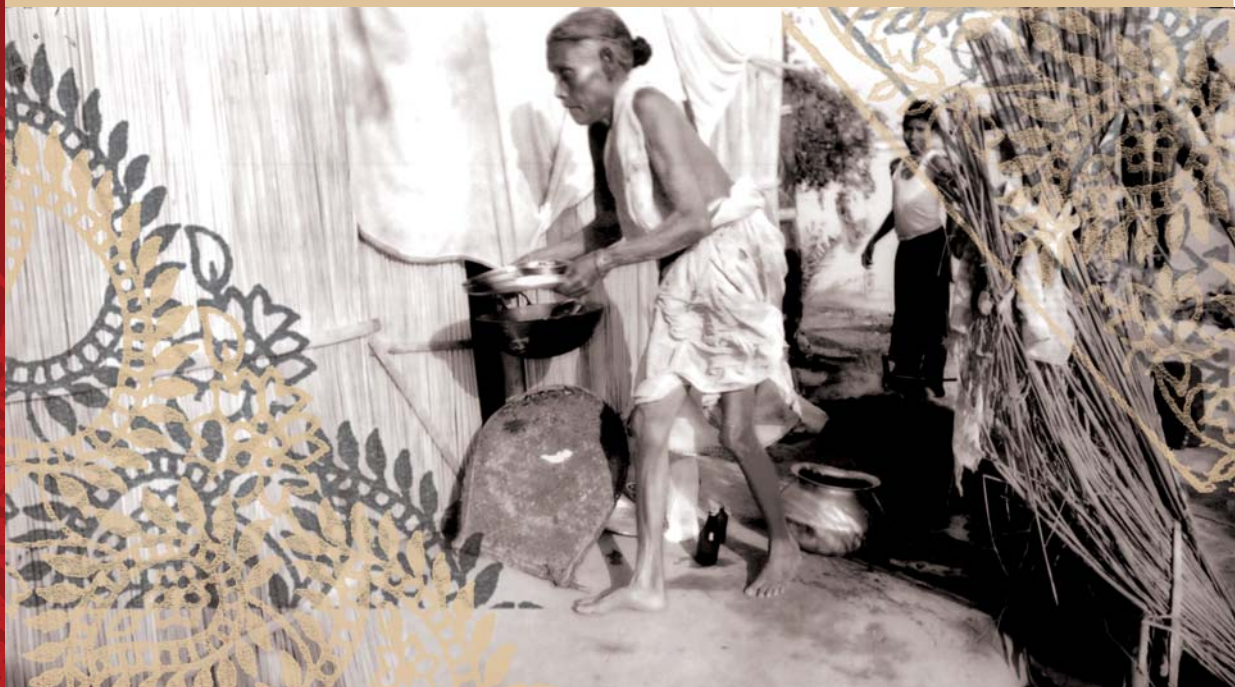
Paid domestic service is a necessity in almost every person's life in Delhi. Domestic services are ever-present but invisible. It is one of the informal sector activities, which is most exploitative with long working hours, low wages and absence of social security provision. In the literature on modern domestic service, trends in occupation have always been explained in terms of the processes of industrialisation and modernisation. Industrialisation and urbanisation are said to encourage the growth of domestic service, with a 'servant-employing' middle class and a surplus of unskilled workers. The growth in domestic service is often attributed to increasing inequality both in the rural and urban areas, the shift from an agrarian-based economy to a manufacture and service-based economy and the rise of an urban middle class.² The sudden increase in demand for domestic workers can also be related to the emergence of dual careers as a new family norm. Employing domestics is no longer a symbol of wealth and aristocracy and it is now largely a middle class and upper middle class phenomenon. The nature of the service has undergone major changes over the period.

According to the Shramsakti Report (1988), out of 23 lakh domestic workers, 16.8 lakh are female. This clearly shows the gendering of this growing informal sector activity. As per the 32nd round of NSSO

(1977-78) there were 16.8 lakh female domestic workers as against 6.2 lakh male domestic workers. The Labour Bureau survey of full-time domestic workers in Delhi (1981)⁴ found that no sex had monopoly over this occupation. Also, the age category of workers was found to be predominantly 30-50 (24 out of 64) and the age category 18-30 and 30-50 occupied (18 out of 64).

A study commissioned by the Catholic Bishops' Conference in 1980 estimated that 78 per cent of domestics in 12 cities were female and in Mumbai, 90 per cent was female. The study also pointed out the gender stratification in paid domestic work, with men occupying better-paying jobs such as cooking and driving, and the low-paying jobs of cleaning and caring left to females.

The demographic status of domestic workers has also undergone changes. During the 1970s and 1980s most female domestics were found to be the head of households, in particular widowed, deserted and older women [Banerjee 1982]. As family migration has increased, younger women have come to occupy a larger proportion of domestic workers [Banerjee 1992]. A survey conducted by the Indian Social Institute [ISI 1993] indicated that only 20 per cent of the total men migrated to Delhi are engaged in domestic work. The survey also revealed that employers show a preference for young women, as they are more reliable, obedient and efficient in domestic work, especially in taking care of babies and the elderly.



Domestic service seems to have become a part of the division of labour, with women from certain areas or regions with specific socio-economic background crowding into this activity. This has been thought of as the result of transformations in class relations and developments of new styles and patterns of living and the high mobility of people. As a result of the changed lifestyles of the middle class, demand for domestic workers has also increased.

Broadly, two systems of domestic work exist in Delhi. One is the system of part time or live-out domestics, which has become increasingly prominent in recent years. These workers perform specific tasks in various households and return to their own houses. The second category is that of live-in domestics, where accommodation is provided by the employer. The ethnic and demographic characteristics, social networking and recruitment/ placement patterns vary considerably between these forms of domestic servitude, though there are commonalities.

TABLE 1: STATEWISE DISTRIBUTION OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

State	Live-out Domestics	Live-in Domestics
Assam	3 (0.65)	4 (3.64)
Bihar	55 (11.83)	18 (16.36)
Delhi	1 (0.22)	–
Goa	1 (0.22)	11 (10.00)
Haryana	1 (0.22)	1 (0.91)
Jharkhand	1 (0.22)	57 (51.82)
Madhya Pradesh	12 (2.58)	4 (3.64)
Orissa	–	14 (12.73)
Punjab	2 (0.43)	–
Rajasthan	3 (0.65)	–
Tamil Nadu	73 (15.70)	–
Uttaranchal	2 (0.43)	–
Uttar Pradesh	141 (30.32)	–
West Bengal	170 (36.56)	2 (1.82)
Total	465 (100.0)	110(100.0)

Note: *Figures in parentheses are proportion to total.*

Source: *Survey data, 2002.*

TABLE 2: PROFILE OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

Age	Live-out Domestics	Live-in Domestics
5-14	1 (0.22)	3 (2.73)
15-20	62 (13.33)	60 (54.55)
21-25	69 (14.84)	33 (30.00)
26-30	142 (30.54)	7 (6.36)
31-40	134 (28.82)	6 (5.45)
41-50	43 (9.25)	–
Above 50	14 (3.01)	1 (0.91)
Total	465 (100.00)	110 (100.00)
Religion		
Hindu	457 (98.28)	9 (8.18)
Christian	8 (1.7)	98 (89.09)
Muslim	–	1 (0.91)
Others	–	2 (1.82)
Total	465 (100.00)	110 (100.00)
Caste category		
Forward caste	10 (2.15)	–
Backward caste	67 (14.41)	2 (1.82)
ST	13 (2.8)	102 (92.73)
SC	375 (80.65)	6 (5.45)
Total	465 (100.00)	110 (100.00)
Marital status		
Single	60 (12.90)	98 (89.09)
Married	385 (82.8)	12 (10.91)
Divorced/	6 (1.21)	–
Abandoned widow	14 (3.01)	–
Total	465 (100.00)	110 (100.00)
Educational status		
Illiterate	259 (55.70)	25 (22.73)
Primary incomplete	147 (31.61)	18 (17.27)
Primary complete	49 (10.54)	13 (12.73)
Middle school	10 (2.15)	38 (34.55)
Secondary	–	14 (12.73)
Total	465 (100.00)	110 (100.00)

MIGRATION AND WOMEN DOMESTICS

Migration and domestic work in cities is closely related, owing to the ease with which migrants can enter this occupation, and its gendered nature. Migration for domestic work, with deep historical roots, has been reinvented in the past two decades. Changes in the gender balance of the migratory stream, the migration of families as kinship units, have influenced the nature of domestic work. Domestic service has been the commonest and also the normally the first occupation of women in almost all countries in the world, though the period varies across countries. Entry restrictions are almost zero in the case of domestic service, as the occupation does not demand any capital or skill.

In the absence of employment opportunities for male members, women are forced to migrate to support the family and children. Domestic work is also seen as an occupation, which enables the urban working class family to survive – an important component of the aggregation of individual means of survival in the urban informal sector. Women migrating for employment are aware of the availability of domestic jobs in the city, higher wages (compared with rural areas) and the conditions of work. Single women (abandoned, separated or divorced) with children to support also migrate and take up domestic work; 4 per cent of the workers covered belonged to this category. The oft-discussed reasons for female migration as a quest for personal freedom, modernisation and the rejection of gender roles are found inapplicable in the case of these workers.

Women are found to have a substantial role in the decision to migrate, in the case of both live-in and live-out domestics. In 48.4 per cent cases of live-out workers, the decision to migrate was taken by the spouse (Table 4). However, women were found to be central in the migration of these families as the calculations of the survival of the family in the city were largely based upon the employment opportunities for women. Domestic work for women is found to be the immediate resort for family survival, after migration. Availability of employment for women was found not only central to the family's decision to migrate but also gave women considerable role in the decisions. Women are found to be the primary decision-makers as far as migration of

the family is concerned, among 33.2 per cent of the live-out domestics. In some cases, it is even seen that male migration is subsequent and subsidiary to that of the woman.

Apart from unemployment and poverty, for the live-in workers migration also meant a rite of passage that provided status, independence, training and savings for marriage on their return. Further, the search for personal freedom and the accompanying rejection of traditional gender roles were also found important. Living in cities is also seen as a step forward in social mobility and status. A few girls also admitted that the visits of domestics from Delhi tempt the aspirants. Some of them were tempted by these predecessors in migration, who visit the village well-dressed, well-fed, dignified and could also support the family. This is reflected in the increased flow of new migrants who have followed the early migrants.

TABLE 3: REASONS FOR MIGRATION OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

Reason for Migration	Live-out Domestics	Live-in Domestics
Poverty	428 (92.04)	2 (1.82)
Unemployment	30 (6.45)	96 (87.27)
Natural calamity	1 (0.91)	
Family disturbances	13 (2.80)	11 (10.00)
Others	4 (0.86)	
Total	465 (100.0)	110 (100.0)

Note: *Figures in parentheses are proportion to total.*

Source: *Survey Data, 2002.*

TABLE 4: MIGRATION DECISIONS AMONG DOMESTIC WORKERS

Agent of Migration	Live-out Domestics	Live-in Domestics
Own	164 (33.2)	71 (64.0)
Spouse	219 (48.4)	1 (0.9)
Parents	69 (15.8)	36 (33.3)
Others	13 (2.6)	2 (1.8)
Total	465(100.0)	110 (100.0)

Note: *Figures in parentheses are proportion to total.*

Source: *Survey data, 2002.*

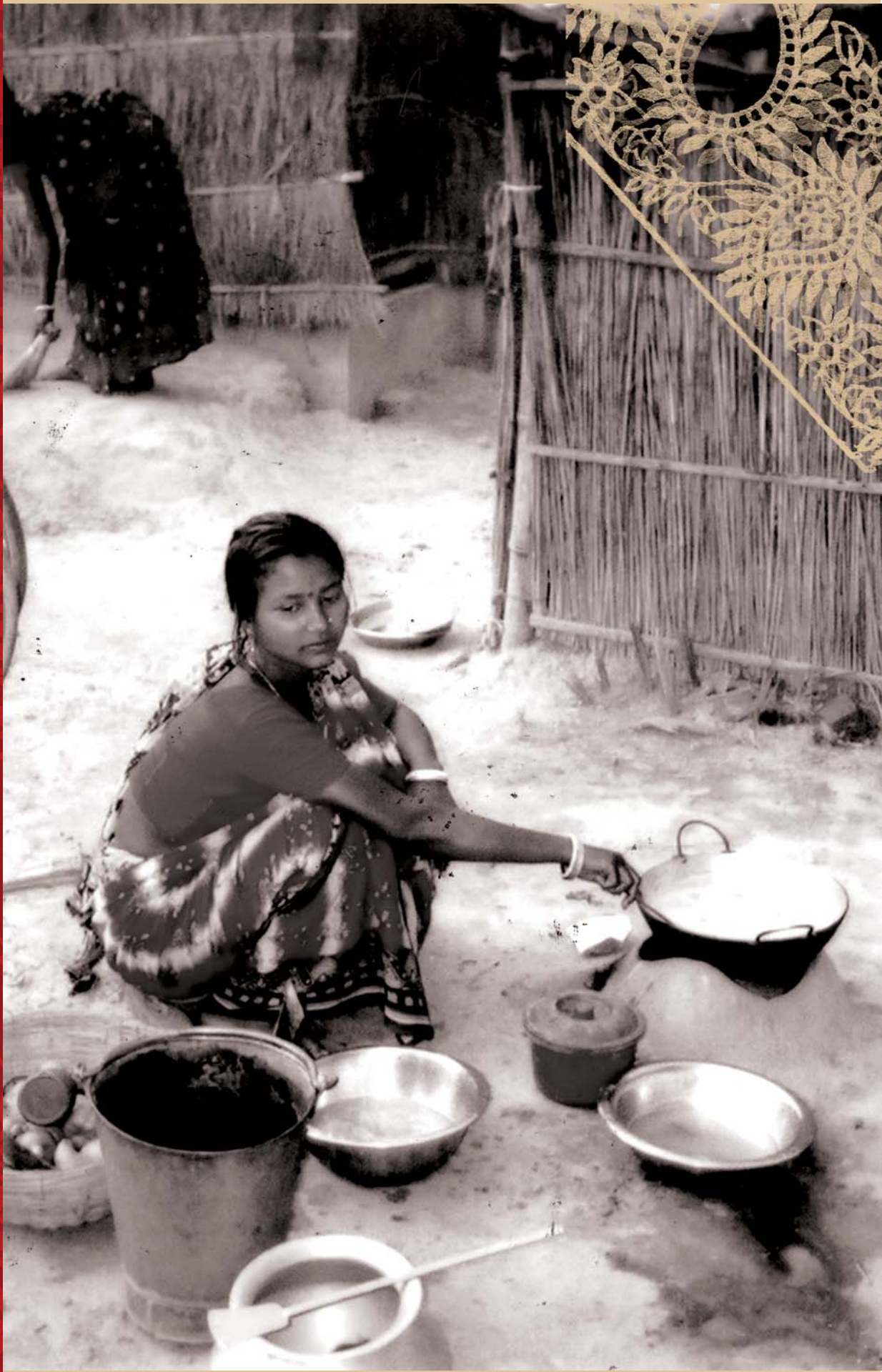
SOCIAL NETWORKING AND WOMEN DOMESTICS

Social networks play a vital role in the process of migration of live-out women domestics. Support is extended to the migrant family either by kith and kin or even by people from the same village, which results in the chain migration of workers from rural to urban areas. Relatives and friends who migrated to Delhi are the major source of networking among live-out domestics.

The flow of families from Bengal, Orissa and UP is mostly after the Diwali season, when some of the members of the households already settled in Delhi go back to the village. In about 82 per cent of the cases, relatives and friends living in Delhi provided the basic information and employment opportunities available.

Women domestics, during their visits to native places, spread the information on the possibility of migration and employment opportunities among relatives and friends. At times, job aspirants accompany these workers on their return. Before coming to Delhi, a small proportion (15.8 per cent) visited their kin/relatives/ friends living in Delhi to find out about the possibility of migration and employment. Family ties are found to be the most important source of networking among domestic workers, especially when the migration was single. This





reinforces the fact that assistance provided by extended family ties is especially important for women, as there is reluctance among them to form close friendships with those who are not related by ties of kinship or marriage. Of the 465 live-outs, 342 were found to have utilised social networks to enter the city and occupation. The support given by the network broadly includes information about the area, boarding and lodging on arrival in the city, help in finding jobs and loans to cover the initial expenditure.

On migration, accommodation for the fresh migrant is arranged mostly with the relative/friend who has facilitated the migration. Around 90 per cent of the workers were found to have stayed with the facilitator on arrival. Most of the workers, though they had information about employment, did not have job waiting on arrival. About 94 per cent of the workers found their job after migration. The waiting period ranged from a few days to more than a year. In most cases (58.9 per cent), the waiting period was found to be less than three months.

Almost all the domestic workers surveyed have received help from others in getting their job. The role of relatives and friends was found central in the employment of domestics, accounting for 88.7 per cent of the surveyed workers. Within this, female networks accounted for about 94 per cent of the cases. As women largely dominate domestic service, they have more contact with middle-class residential areas and are found further sharpening the sexual division of labour in domestic service.

Apart from job seeking, relatives and friends are found to be the most important source in introducing the new domestic to employers. Mostly, the host, who herself is a domestic help, introduces the migrant women to employers. This introduction is of utmost importance for entry into the occupation due to security concerns of the employers and also because of the language barrier of the new entrant. Personal contacts are the preferred method of locating domestic worker as such introductions serve as references, helping the employer to assess the domestic worker as a person. Further, as the domestics usually stay outside the residential areas of the employers this is the only method through which employers get in touch with new entrants.

Often, the host facilitates the entry of fresh migrants to the occupation, by entrusting the fresh worker with the charge of one or two houses were the host works.

Networking is not only important in entering into domestic work, but also in looking out for future jobs. New job opportunities are often spread through the network. The survey data shows that friends and relatives are again the major source of information on future jobs. Women, due to their influence over the access to entry to work, dominate the networking among domestic workers. The gender-specific demand for domestics has furthered subsequent migration movements, based on social and kinship networking. Once the pattern of migration is established through the network of kin, these workers encourage future migrants, and thus reinforce the pattern of channelising and supporting other migrants from their home community.⁹ The concentration of domestics from certain pockets or villages has largely been on account of this chain migration. Social networking is found to have resulted not only in the gendering of domestic work, but also in creating strong segmentation and identity formation among domestic workers. Through networking the domestics construct and maintain their cultural and social identities, which otherwise are lost in urban living.

Kith and kin relationships provide domestic workers the most critical basis of interaction among individuals. Since leave is limited and travel is expensive, such support is very important for domestic workers living in squatter settlements. Leave is not normally sanctioned and absence is punished by scolding and threat of dismissal from work and employment. Slums/squatter settlements are normally places of regular conflict between the dwellers, police, and urban development authorities. There is no safety for money and assets, and in many cases, threat comes from male members who are unemployed. The network of relatives and friends often acts as the most reliable custodian of valuables. Child care and sharing of household responsibilities are also important functions of these networks. In the absence of any social care and support these women help each other with housework and child care responsibilities. Informal gatherings and joint cultural/ethnic celebrations are also noticed among these women. The system of common monthly

leave found among some groups of domestic workers to provide for regular meeting of the workers also points to the collectivity of these domestics.¹⁰

Unlike live-out workers, apart from personal and informal networking, which is highly women centred, the role of agency networks are found to be important in the process of migration and entry to work for live-in domestics. The informal movement of workers is organised through agency systems and networks.

The organisations and agencies act as employment agency to the fresh migrants, find jobs through seeking out families who require domestics, and thus act as the central agency between the employer and domestic workers. Girls from tribal areas mostly migrate to Delhi during January to March. The peak period of migration is between mid-January and February-end. This is associated with the Christmas holidays, when most of the tribal domestics visit their native place. The recruitment and placement organizations are based on these flows of girls. Workers who are placed through the organisations are encouraged to bring selected new entries to the organisation. Some organisations restrict the number of people to be brought with a view to manage the food, accommodation and training of the new entrants. Entries to these organisations are restricted and hence networks of kinfolk are important. Of the 110 workers surveyed, 80 per cent got the information through old or current domestics employed through the organisation, who were relatives. For recruiting fresh workers, the link or network is through old workers either currently employed or those who had left the organisation. About 34 per cent of the workers were reported to have recommended or brought girls from their locality to their organisation. Information about other agencies and availability of jobs is also disseminated by old workers and current workers. The personal networking among live in domestics and the working of the agencies, voluntary as well as private is increasingly leading to the construction of regional identities as far as live-in domestics are concerned.

The ways in which placement agencies match suitable employees to jobs reinforces stereotypes pertaining to the natural qualities of

women of different regions. Regional identities are seen as signifying a group's proclivity to domestic work as well as the quality of care they are able to provide. The survey has found that employers show a preference for young tribal girls, because they seem to be more reliable, obedient and efficient in domestic work. Further, these women also stick to the jobs for longer periods, agree to work for lower wages and can be controlled more easily. Security considerations of the household, with increased incidences of male domestics involvement in crimes, is also found to play a major role in the gendering of live-in domestics.

Yet another important form of migration for domestic work from the tribal pockets is the group migration of tribal girls. Girls organise themselves into groups which have as their leader one person who has either worked in Delhi as a domestic worker or is known to someone working as domestic worker or has some information about the city and its employment opportunities. Tribal girls come to Delhi in large numbers by train during January-March looking for employment. Most of these workers migrate under the influence of old workers who have visited their native place during Christmas and other tribal festivals. Added to the money income, the charm of the city also attracts many workers, who are the main source of workers for private agencies. About 12,000 girls migrate to Delhi every year as groups.



FEMALE BREADWINNERS

The centrality of women characterises household survival even after migration. The contribution of domestics to the total family income is found to be substantial. In case of live out domestics, the entire burden of familial expenditure is borne by women in a large number of households (42 per cent). The day-to-day expenditure on food, clothing, education and health care is met largely by them. Even the dwellings are mostly leased in by women domestics themselves.

Despite women's considerable contribution to family income and survival, social control is found largely to rest with the male. Patriarchal relations are visible in terms of violence against women such as wife-beating, even in cases where husbands are unemployed. Nevertheless, migration is also a terrain where gender relations are renegotiated. The before-and-after experience of women domestics, the shift from old world values, customs, habits and traditions and the demands of the new place redefine and reposition their status within home and in the community. Women have some control over household expenses and allocation on various heads, especially when the contribution to family income is higher compared with the male members. The dynamics of gender relations and its social acceptance could be traced from the leasehold status of the women domestics. The strong preference of house owners to rent out houses to female domestics indicates the social recognition of women as household heads and the changing gender equations within the household.

In the case of live-in domestics also, a considerable proportion (and in many cases even the full amount) of their earnings is sent to support the family in the rural areas. This income, apart from meeting the daily expenses of the family, is mostly used to settle debts or for the education of the siblings.

The economic dependence of the family on the domestics, has meant increased decision-making role for these women. The decision on the extent and nature of education to be imparted to the siblings is mostly taken either by women domestics themselves or in consultation with parents and other siblings. Even in decisions related to family borrowings and marriages of siblings, migrant domestics assume key

roles. Since the income of the domestics is the major form of cash for the family, borrowings by the family were mostly repaid from the salary of the domestics, which necessitates the concurrence of these women. Financial details of marriages are also seen fixed in consultation with the domestics. Dates of marriages in rural areas were found in many cases fixed according to the possibility of the domestic obtaining leave. Unlike other tribal girls, the worker status also ensures these women have decision-making power regarding their own marriages. The main source of dowry being their savings from domestic work guarantee domestics some control over decisions related to marriage. Increased decision-making power with regard to age at marriage and selection of bridegroom was reported by most of the respondents, which reflects the changing power relations in these households.

CONCLUSION

The case of women domestics is a classic example of the centrality of women in the migration process and in the endurance of the family in migrant destinations. Women domestics are found to assume vital functions and have specific roles in the migration process. Women-centred social and kinship networking based on gender has not only furthered subsequent migration of women, but is also central to the employment and survival of migrant families. They assist migration by providing income support, information about the destination, first residence and access to jobs. Thus it is argued that networking through kith and kin enables women's labour mobility from rural areas to the metropolis. These developments were found to lead not only to the gendering of domestic work, but also in creating strong segmentation and identity formation among domestic workers.

The centrality of women domestics in the migration process and systems points to the need to re-examine the validity of some of the widely accepted male-centric explanations in migration literature. There is a need to rethink and reconceptualise the migration process in general and its agent, the male migrant. Women migrants also need to be seen as part of the migration systems and subsystems, with numerous roles and functions.



Female migrants are powerful agents in building and maintaining social and personal structures pertaining to migration and in the decision-making for the family. This largely redefines their familial roles, social and economic status, and give women domestics the status of household-head and the prime breadwinner. Migration for domestic service is largely a female-driven phenomenon, based on personal and social relationships. Social networking, which is largely female centred, is found to influence the migration decision, the process of migration and also the day-to-day life of the migrants. Thus, migration of women domestics needs to be understood as a collective endeavour that represents the experience within a set of family relationships, as opposed to the commonly perceived notion of male migration, which is autonomous and individualistic.

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